

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-19 (Canceled)

20. (New) A method for discriminating bacteria contained in urine sample, comprising:

mixing the urine sample and a first reagent comprising a cationic surfactant and a substance capable of reducing nitrite ions;

preparing an assay sample by mixing the obtained mixture and a second reagent comprising a polymethine dye for staining bacteria;

introducing the assay sample into a detecting part of a flow cytometer, irradiating the assay sample in the detecting part, and measuring scattered light and fluorescent light; and

discriminating the bacteria from other component based on the measured scattered light and fluorescent light.

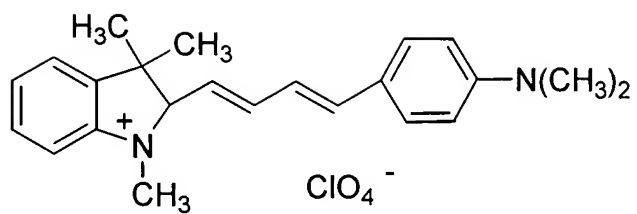
21. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the substance capable of reducing nitrite ions is selected from the group consisting of:

ascorbic acid, isoascorbic acid, aminomethanesulfonic acid, aminoethanesulfonic acid, glutamic acid, asparatic acid, mercaptoacetic acid, 3-mercaptopropionic acid, sulfamic acid, sulfanilic acid, sulfurous acid, pyrosulfurous acid, phosphinic acid, glycine, glutamine, asparagine, methionine, glutathione, cysteine, hydroxylamine and salts thereof; sulfanilamide; aminomethane; mercaptoethanol; thiophenol and urea.

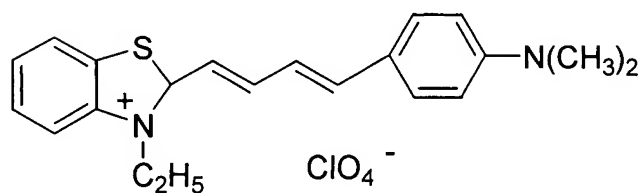
22. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the polymethine dye is at least one selected from the following group consisting of:

(1) Thiazole Orange;

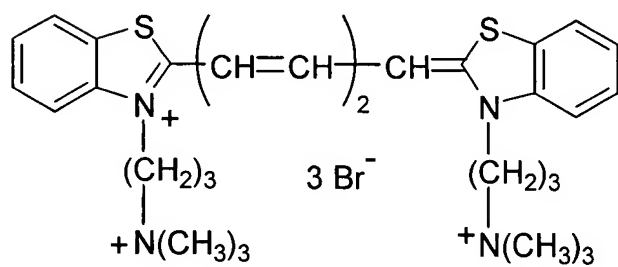
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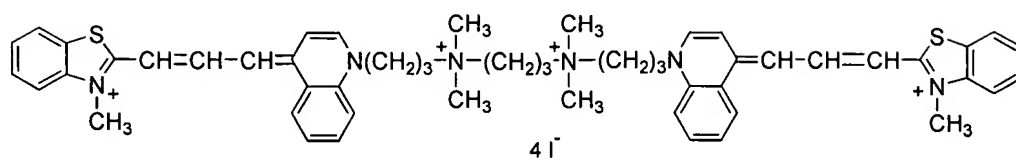
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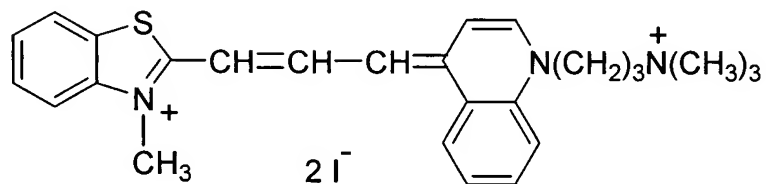
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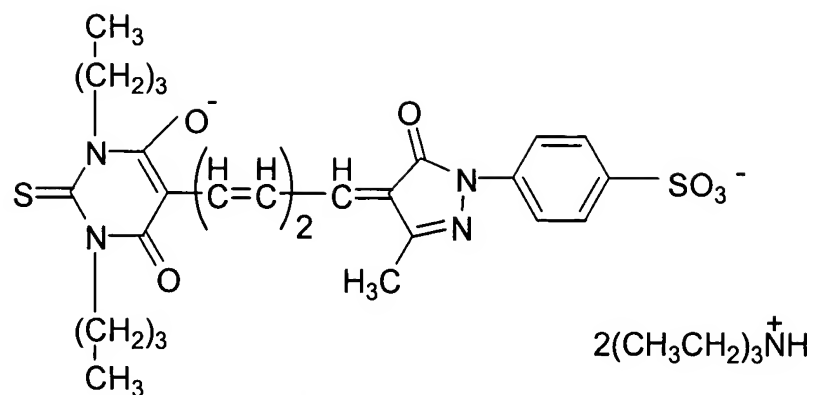
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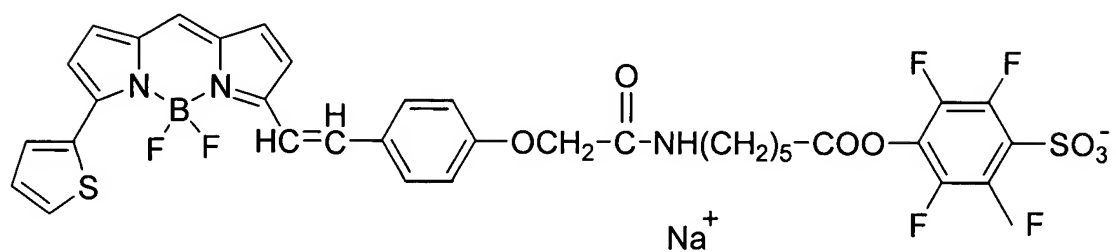
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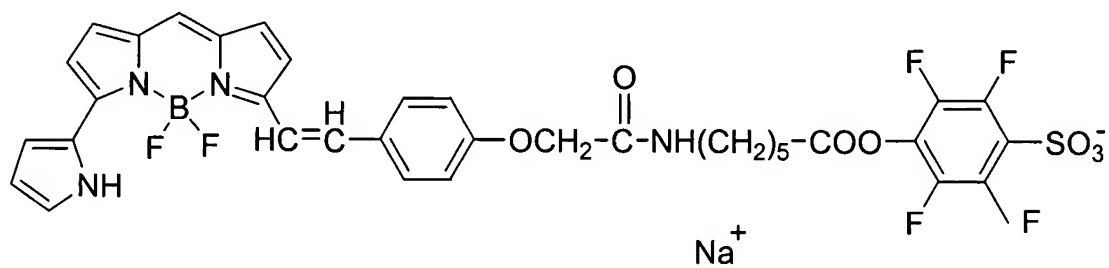
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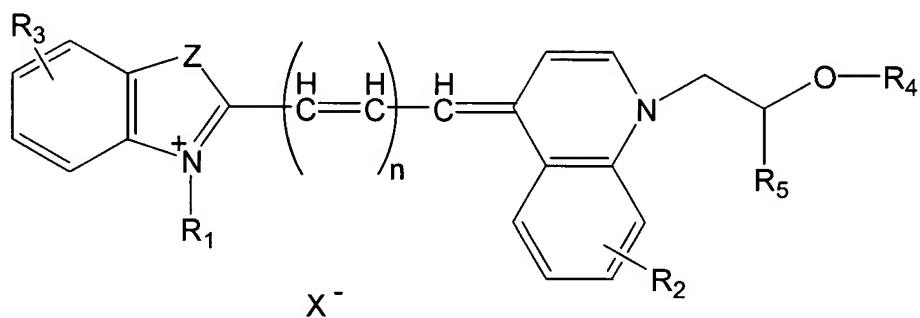
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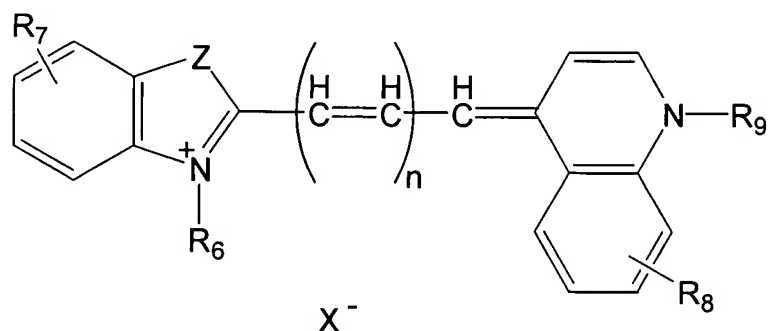
(9)



(10) a compound represented by the following general formula:

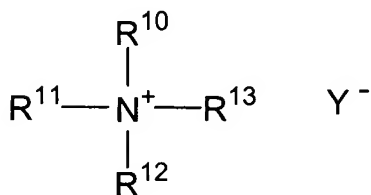


wherein R_1 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-3} alkyl group; R_2 - and R_3 are a hydrogen atom, a C_{1-3} alkyl group or a C_{1-3} alkoxy group; R_4 is a hydrogen atom, an acyl group or a C_{1-3} alkyl group; R_5 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-3} alkyl group which may be substituted; Z is a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom or a carbon atom substituted with a C_{1-3} alkyl group; n is 1 or 2; X^0 is an anion; and
 (11) a compound represented by the following general formula:



wherein R_6 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-18} alkyl group; R_7 and R_8 are a hydrogen atom, a C_{1-3} alkyl group or a C_{1-3} alkoxy group; R_9 is a hydrogen atom, an acyl group or a C_{1-18} alkyl group; Z is sulfur, oxygen or a carbon atom having a C_{1-3} alkyl group; n is 0, 1 or 2; X^- is an anion.

23. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the cationic surfactant is a quaternary ammonium salt represented by the following formula:



wherein R^{10} is a C_{6-18} alkyl group or a benzyl group; R^{11} , R^{12} and R^{13} , the same or different, are a C_{1-3} alkyl group or a benzyl group; Y^- is a halogen ion.

24. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein the quaternary ammonium salt is at least one selected from the group consisting of: decyl trimethyl ammonium salt, dodecyl trimethyl ammonium salt, tetradecyl trimethyl ammonium salt, hexadecyl trimethyl ammonium salt and octadecyl trimethyl ammonium salt.

25. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the first reagent has an acidic pH.

26. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the first reagent has pH of 2.0-4.5.

27. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the first reagent comprises a buffer of pKa 1-5.5.

28. (New) The method according to claim 27, wherein the buffer is at least one selected from the group consisting of: citric acid-NaOH, potassium dihydrogen phosphate-disodium hydrogen phosphate, potassium dihydrogen phosphate-NaOH, citric acid- disodium hydrogen phosphate, potassium hydrogen phthalate-NaOH, succinic acid-NaOH, lactic acid-NaOH, ϵ -aminocaproic acid-HCl, fumaric acid-HCl, β -alanine-NaOH and glycine-NaOH.

29. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the first reagent comprises an inorganic salt of either sulfate or nitrate.

30. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the dye is present at 0.1 to 100 ppm in the assay sample.

31. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the cationic surfactant exists at 10 to 30000 mg/l in the assay sample.

32. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the discriminating step is performed by discriminating the bacteria based on at least two selected from the group consisting of an intensity of the scattered light, an intensity of the fluorescent light and a pulse width of the scattered light.

33. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the discriminating step is performed by discriminating the bacteria based on an intensity of the scattered light, an intensity of the fluorescent light and a pulse width of the scattered light.

34. (New) The method according to claim 20, comprising the step of counting the discriminated bacteria.